

# RESIGNATION AS MEMBER OF PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

The Speaker laid before the House the following resignation as a member of the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence:

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
Washington, DC, May 26, 2016.

Hon. PAUL D. RYAN,  
Speaker of the House,  
Washington, DC.

DEAR SPEAKER RYAN: I, Luis V. Gutiérrez, am submitting my resignation from the Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence effective immediately.

It has been a privilege and honor to have served the last three Congresses on this Committee, whose work and service is absolutely vital to the security of the United States and whose oversight over the Department of Defense and the intelligence community safeguards the civil liberties and safety of all Americans.

Stepping down from the Committee will allow me to commit more time and energy to other priority issues of my constituents, as well as allow another one of our colleagues the opportunity to serve on this important Committee. Serving on the Intelligence Committee has been one of my greatest honors while in Congress and I am deeply grateful to have had the chance to serve in this capacity.

Sincerely,

LUIS V. GUTIÉRREZ,  
Member of Congress.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, the resignation is accepted. There was no objection.

## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 2015, the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. RUSSELL) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

Mr. RUSSELL. Madam Speaker, since December 15, 1791, nearly 225 years, our Congress has operated under the constitutional requirement to do the following. Amendment 1 of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution of the United States of America:

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press; or the right of the people to peaceably assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

I am saddened, Madam Speaker, that, in our current day, the greatest assault on the free exercise of religion is being perpetuated, seemingly, by those most responsible to protect it: those who are sworn to uphold the law.

Worse still, we see our Armed Forces, whose singular purpose is to support and defend the Constitution, now perpetually being used as the vehicle to subvert the very document that they risked their lives to defend.

In a recent example, we have seen executive guidance with regard to religious corporations, religious associations, religious educational institutions, and religious societies placed in jeopardy.

More than 2,000 Federal Government contracts a year are awarded to religious organizations and contractors that provide essential services in many vital programs. Now many of these services are being impacted due to conflicting, ambiguous executive guidance.

Here are some examples:

Chaplain services. Multiple organizations provide chaplains and related services to the military and other government agencies.

□ 1200

Chaplains have faced significant religious liberty challenges in pursuing contracts with religious education directories, youth ministers, musicians, and other religious service providers who adhere to the teachings of their particular faith. Without protecting free exercise of religion, chaplains have been forced to hire people that work directly against their teachings, tenets, and faith. This is a clear violation of the First Amendment.

Here is another example: refugee service providers. The vast majority of refugee and suffering vulnerable population relief is done by religious service organizations. I have worked with many on battlefields in my time as a career soldier.

Because of bad agency guidance, now these organizations are facing mounting liability related to their performance under grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements. Sadly, when these organizations cannot partner with the government, the relief of human suffering just goes away, seldom being replaced.

The groups under assault are often the best—if not the only—organizations able to offer the assistance they perform, doing invaluable work to relieve the suffering, aid the returning combat warrior, assist in the rehabilitation of substance abuse for those not adjusting well, and many other such services that have been going on for many decades.

To curtail the blatant discrimination against these groups, I offered a simple amendment to protect them under existing law which passed in the National Defense Authorization, and that existing law upheld is the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act.

You would have thought I had killed someone's mother. Instead of upholding the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, we have now seen this body continue its assault on faith in America. It is not enough to level accusations of injustice by some. They will not be satisfied until their assaults of intolerance on people of faith in this country has produced an elimination of God in public life in America.

We are accused of hatred, called out as shameful on this floor, and enjoined to use the whole Constitution to support an opposing view that embodies behavior, mores, and outcomes that not only violate our conscience, but have been prohibited under the laws of nature and nature's God.

In the last 50 years, we have seen the Constitution used by these ideologues to kill American children in the womb, eliminate family structure, elevate behavior over belief, redefine marriage, and assault into silence and inaction any who may oppose them. Not satisfied, we see them without rest on their quest to eliminate free exercise of faith in the United States.

Do we really want a Nation without God?

They would call it progress, yet our conscience knows differently. The Apostle Paul explains why when he said this:

For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools.

Therefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature, rather than the Creator.

The Creator, our Nation has always been anchored in the Creator, from its inception throughout our history. God has been the foundation of our Republic as seen in the sweeping lines of the Declaration of Independence, when it drove our Founders to proclaim "the separate and equal Station to which the Laws of Nature and Nature's God entitle them, a decent Respect to the Opinions of Mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the Separation."

"We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness."

That life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness could not be realized without God in our Republic. George Washington spoke for all Americans in his first inaugural address, that "No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts the affairs of men more than . . . the United States."

Our Nation's survival and prosperity in the future were understood to be dependent upon faith. When Washington left office in the most remarkable, peaceful transfer of power the world had seen, he warned of a future that somehow supposed that we could have order and prosperity without faith. In his last address to the Nation, he declared:

Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to the political prosperity, religion and